

native to North America are certainly not of indigenous occurrence on the islands, but have been introduced either accidentally or intentionally. As examples of such may be mentioned *Glaucium flavum* and *Solanum triflorum*, which grow on the beach near Tarpaulin Cove, Naushon, and *Juniperus communis*, var. *depressa*, which appears to have been planted along the north shore at the west end of the same island.

(To be continued)

WHAT IS SCIRPUS CAPITATUS LINN?

OLIVER ATKINS FARWELL

IN RHODORA for February, 1918, pages 23 and 24, Mr. S. F. Blake attempts to show that the Linnean name should apply to what has generally been known as *Eleocharis tenuis* (Willd.) Schultes and also that *E. capitatus* (L.) R. Br. must be considered as a synonym of it.

Blake says: "The name *Eleocharis capitata* (L.) R. Br., Prod. Fl. Nov. Holl. i. 225 (1810), has a somewhat peculiar status. It was based on 'Scirpus capitatus, Linn., sp. pl. ed. Willd. 1. p. 294,' but was expressly distinguished from the Gronovian plant, which of course Brown had examined, type of *S. capitatus* L. Since however Willdenow's *S. capitatus* is based directly on Linnaeus's, the application of Brown's name must be determined by the Clayton plant on which rests the name-bringing synonym of Linnaeus. The name *ELEOCHARIS CAPITATA* (L.) R. Br. must therefore now be restricted to the plant which has long been called *Eleocharis tenuis* (Willd.) Schultes."

There are several errors in the above:

- (1.) The Clayton plant is not the type of the species.
- (2.) "(L.)" should not be placed before "R. Br.", since Brown expressly said that the Gronovian plant was not his species, but that he based his name on *S. capitatus* Willd., which are not synonymous names, Blake to the contrary, notwithstanding.
- (3.) "Linn" is not the author of *Scirpus capitatus* Sp. Pl. IV. 1. p. 294, but Willdenow is.
- (4.) The making of Brown's name a synonym of Schultes's name in face of Brown's express statement that they were not the same. I cannot follow the twistings and windings of a brain that will de-

liberately place a name where the original author expressly says it doesn't belong.

Blake says that the Linnean *S. capitatus* Linn is based "almost entirely on the Gronovian reference, which in turn is based on Clayton 380," Not so!!! Linn had his own description, similar it is true, but quite distinct, and it was based, in my estimation, not on the Gronovian reference and the Clayton plant but on the only plant at that time in his herbarium, which he himself named *S. capitatus*; Blake says this plant is what is now known as *Eleocharis obtusa* (Willd.) Schultes. It fits the Linnean description quite well enough to be its type, and should be so construed. *E. obtusa* (Willd.) Schultes then becomes a synonym of *E. capitatus* (L.) n. comb. *Scirpus capitatus* Linn; also of Willd. p. p. *E. capitatus* (Willd.) R. Br. is a synonym of *E. caribaea* (Rottb.) Blake.

While it is true that Linn listed the description of Clayton's plant by Gronovius as a synonym, yet Linn's own description, though very similar, and his herbarium specimen from which that description was drawn should take precedence over any synonym quoted.

Willdenow's *S. capitatus*, as indicated above, not only included the Linnean species of the same name but also a West Indian species, and it was to this West Indian species that R. Br. restricted the name when he transferred it to *Eleocharis*. As pointed out by Blake, it has an older name; it occurs also in the southeastern United States.

Like Dr. Britton, I think it incredible that any author should call such a spike as is found on *E. tenuis* "subglobose," and in consequence assign it the name of *capitatus*. It seems more reasonable to believe that the original Clayton plant on which the Gronovian description was based was a plant with a subglobose spike (*E. obtusa* or even *E. capitata* as applied in our local manuals) and that the original specimen was exchanged or lost and later replaced with the plant at present in the Clayton collection. Too much reliance should not be placed upon specimens in old herbaria. It is a well known fact that such changes in the older herbaria were frequent, if not more frequent than otherwise, and if such a change occurred in the present instance, all confusion over the terms "subglobose" and "capitatus" would immediately disappear and vanish into thin air.

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